

SUMMARY OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE SECRETARY'S ADVISORY
COMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL

A. A single but flexible personnel system should apply to all people under the control of the Secretary of State

The Committee has recommended that substantially all Civil Service employees in the Department and the personnel of the Foreign Service be placed in one Service under a single personnel system.

1. This system should be established initially outside of the present Civil Service system but employees should be able to acquire Civil Service status.

2. Since the Foreign Service performs services for a number of Government departments and agencies having a concern in foreign relations, the personnel system should meet the needs of these agencies, including the means whereby they can temporarily assign members of their staffs to the new Service.

3. Employees should be subject to a common set of personnel policies. These policies should adequately recognize the special requirements occasioned by service abroad, such as provision for additional leave, medical benefits, and living and quarters allowances.

4. Employees should be obligated to serve both at home and abroad to the extent that this is necessary for the satisfactory performance of duties. However, this requirement of dual service should not be imposed as a universal condition of employment since many of the Department's operations are essentially confined to Washington.

5. The essential features of the personnel system, including adequate safeguards against political and other forms of favoritism in matters of appointment and promotion, should be prescribed by statute.

6. The new Service should include a minimum number of personnel categories.

a. One such category should be a Foreign Affairs Officer group which should be composed of American personnel (excluding top officials, such as Assistant Secretaries and Chiefs of Mission) concerned with substantive policy matters and operations in such fields as political, economic, legal, consular, international security and public affairs and higher level administrative personnel. This group would include general officers and specialists but would exclude technicians.

b. A second category should include custodial, clerical, most administrative, and technical personnel. Persons in this group should be able to enter the Foreign Affairs Officer category through competitive examination.

B. A positive personnel program should be developed

The Committee has recommended that a positive personnel program should be developed for the integrated Service to include the following features:

1. Positive recruitment of the best available people at all levels subject to the maintenance of the career principle. Recruitment should be based on a long-term estimate of the number and kinds of people that will be needed.

2. Selection of Foreign Affairs Officers at the entrance level on the basis of a rigorous and comprehensive written, oral and physical examination. The written examination should include a general examination supplemented by a series of examination options in various specialized fields such as economics, agriculture, public affairs, or administration. A candidate with specialized training in agriculture, for example, would be required to pass the general examination and a special examination in his particular field of agriculture.

3. Appointment of qualified persons from the outside to the intermediate and higher grades of the Foreign Affairs Officer group whenever the Service is unable to supply enough qualified officers by promotion from within. In addition, the permanent staff should be supplemented by appointing persons for a temporary period in order to enable other agencies to assign personnel abroad, to make use of specialists for work which the Service is not equipped to handle, and to help staff new or expanded programs, and for other purposes.

4. Use of classification to identify the types and levels of work in the Service and as a guide in recruitment, salary determination, assignment and promotion.

5. Establishment of a single salary schedule for the Foreign Affairs Service similar to the Civil Service pay rates. Salary differentials should be paid to all Foreign Affairs Service personnel when assigned to hardship posts.

6. A planned program of career development, assignment and use of employees, including more assignments of officers to other agencies, expanded training programs, and more efficient scheduling of tours of duty at overseas posts.

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7. A promotional system based on systematic review of employee qualifications by selection panels on the basis of merit, including provision for more rapid advancement of outstanding officers. Officers in specialized fields should be able to compete favorably with general officers for advancement to positions of command. A selection-out process should be used to eliminate officers who are consistently below standard in comparison with the performance of their associates, but selection-out should not apply to officers who are fully capable of meeting assigned responsibilities.

8. A uniform leave system and retirement with a higher rate of leave and increased retirement credit being granted for service performed abroad than for service in the United States.

9. Reorganization of the Office of Personnel on a functional basis; provision for continuance of a Board of Examiners responsible for the administration of all examinations for entry into the Service; and, provision for inter-agency advisory machinery, such as the Board of the Foreign Service to advise the Secretary on broad program and policy matters.

C. Effect a gradual transition to the new Service

The Committee has recommended that studies should be started without delay to prepare the necessary legislation that would be required to establish a new Foreign Affairs Service. Pending the enactment of such legislation, the Committee has outlined a number of steps in Chapter III of its report which it considers should be taken to pave the way for full implementation of its recommendations.

Illustrative examples of such steps are as follows:

1. Identify Departmental positions for which dual service is desirable and fill as many of these positions as possible with persons with overseas experience.
2. Ascertain the willingness of Departmental employees to serve abroad and develop and apply standards to determine the suitability of those who are willing to serve overseas.
3. Increase the exchange of staff between Washington and the field.
4. Develop an improved promotion program for the Departmental Service and give more weight to occupational specialization as a promotion factor for Foreign Service Officers.

5. Reduce to a minimum the hiring of Foreign Service Staff Officers at levels and occupations that clearly overlap the functions of Foreign Service Officers, and substitute more employment into the FSO category, particularly at the lower levels.